

SEPTEMBER 23, 1976

GALLUP WORLD SURVEY: THE QUALITY OF LIFE
(PART 1 OF 2)

ANNCR:

THE MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE FIRST WORLD POLL OF HUMAN VALUES AND ATTITUDES WERE RELEASED THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON. VOA'S JOSEPH SULLIVAN, IN THIS (THE FIRST OF TWO) REPORT (S), LOOKS AT THE METHODOLOGY USED IN THE SURVEY AND EXAMINES SOME OF ITS RESULTS.

VOICE:

THE FINDINGS OF THE WORLD SURVEY WERE UNVEILED MONDAY (SEPTEMBER 20) BY AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION POLLSTER GEORGE GALLUP IN TESTIMONY BEFORE THE U.S. SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE. (OPT) THE SURVEY WAS FUNDED BY THE CHARLES F. KETTERING FOUNDATION AND CONDUCTED IN MOST AREAS BY SURVEY ORGANIZATIONS AFFILIATED WITH THE GALLUP INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE. (END OPT) ONE-HOUR INTERVIEWS WERE CONDUCTED WITH TEN THOUSAND PERSONS AT EVERY ECONOMIC LEVEL IN SOME SEVENTY COUNTRIES. THE SURVEY DOES NOT TAKE IN THE COMMUNIST WORLD, OR THE MIDDLE EAST, BUT ITS FINDINGS DO COVER APPROXIMATELY TWO-THIRDS OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION.

THE RESPONDENTS WERE ASKED ONE HUNDRED QUESTIONS DEALING WITH THE QUALITY OF LIFE AND INCLUDING ISSUES OF GROWING GLOBAL IMPORTANCE, SUCH AS POPULATION GROWTH, INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, URBANIZATION, AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS. IN MEASURING INDIVIDUAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE, THREE SEPARATE PROCEDURES WERE USED. THE FIRST CONSISTED OF QUESTIONS ELICITING THE INDIVIDUAL'S OWN SENSE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING ... HOW INTERESTING HE THOUGHT HIS LIFE IS ... HOW MUCH HE WORRIES ... WHAT PART LUCK HAS PLAYED ... HOW HAPPY HE REGARDS HIMSELF ... WHAT CHANGES HE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE IN HIS LIFE.

THE SECOND PROCEDURE REQUIRED THE PERSON INTERVIEWED TO DESCRIBE THE IDEAL LIFE AS HE VISUALIZES IT, AND THEN THE WORST POSSIBLE LIFE, AND TO PLACE HIMSELF SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THESE EXTREMES ON A TEN-POINT SCALE. THE THIRD APPROACH SOUGHT TO MEASURE THE DEGREE OF SATISFACTION WITH IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S LIFE, SUCH AS HIS HEALTH, STANDARD OF LIVING, HOUSING, AND COMMUNITY. TO INDICATE THE DEGREE OF HIS SATISFACTION, THE RESPONDENT HAD MERELY TO POINT TO ONE STEP IN A 10-STEP PATH UP A MOUNTAIN ... THE HIGHEST STEP REPRESENTING THE HIGHEST DEGREE OF SATISFACTION ... THE BOTTOM STEP, THE LOWEST.

WHEN THE FINDINGS FROM THESE THREE DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO MEASURING THE QUALITY OF LIFE WERE COMPARED, THE RATINGS OF THE DIFFERENT CONTINENTS CAME OUT IN THE SAME ORDER. THE PEOPLE OF NORTH AMERICA -- THAT IS, THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA -- WERE AT THE TOP OF ALL THREE RATINGS, CONSIDERING THEMSELVES MOST SATISFIED WITH THEIR LIVES. THEY WERE FOLLOWED BY THE PEOPLE OF WESTERN EUROPE. NEXT CAME LATIN AMERICAN, AND THEN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA. THE FAR EAST WAS AT THE BOTTOM OF ALL THE SCALES.

MISTER GALLUP SAYS THAT THE WORLD SURVEY FINDINGS TEND TO REFUTE TWO THEORIES THAT HAVE GAINED SOME ACCEPTANCE IN RECENT YEARS. ONE HOLDS THAT THE SUICIDE RATE OF A NATION IS A GOOD INDEX OF THE HAPPINESS OF THE PEOPLE LIVING THERE. SINCE SWEDEN HAS A HIGH SUICIDE RATE IT IS OFTEN RATED LOW IN RESPECT TO THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF ITS PEOPLE. YET SWEDEN EMERGES FROM THE STUDY AS ONE OF THE TOP NATIONS OF THE WORLD IN RESPECT TO THE SATISFACTION AND CONTENTMENT OF ITS CITIZENS WITH THE LIFE THEY LEAD.

ANOTHER THEORY HOLDS THAT HAPPINESS IS A FUNCTION OF THE AMOUNT OF DAILY AND YEARLY SUNSHINE. IF THIS WERE TRUE, MISTER GALLUP NOTES, THEN THE NATIONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA AND THE TROPICAL LANDS OF THE WORLD SHOULD RATE FAR HIGHER THAN NATIONS IN NORTHERN LATITUDES. DURING MANY MONTHS OF THE YEAR THE SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES HAVE A LIMITED AMOUNT OF SUNSHINE. YET, IN THE SURVEY THEY STAND FAR HIGHER ON THE SCALES THAN DO THE SUN-DRENCHED NATIONS.

MISTER GALLUP TOLD THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE THAT THE MOST STRIKING FINDING OF THE SURVEY IS THAT THE GULF WHICH SEPARATES THE ADVANCED SOCIETIES FROM THE DEVELOPING NATIONS IN RESPECT TO MATERIAL WELL-BEING IS JUST AS WIDE IN RESPECT TO PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING. ONLY IN THE ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL STATES OF THE WESTERN WORLD, HE OBSERVED, CAN THE INHABITANTS ENGAGE IN ANYTHING AKIN TO A "PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS," THE PHRASE USED IN THE AMERICAN DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. IN THE PLANNING STAGES OF THE SURVEY, HE SAID, IT WAS HOPED THAT SOMEWHERE IN THE WORLD A NATION WOULD BE FOUND WHOSE PEOPLE ARE POOR BUT HAPPY. BUT, HE ADDED, "WE FOUND NONE."

SOME OF THE FINDINGS OF THE FIRST GLOBAL SURVEY OF HUMAN VALUES AND ATTITUDES. (OPT) IN OUR NEXT REPORT WE'LL LOOK AT THE SURVEY IN THE CONTEXT OF MEETING MAN'S BASIC NEEDS. (END OPT)

GH/PBM